

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the instant application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method of permitting a user to remain in contact with at least one other entity comprising:

establishing a contact list comprising the at least one other entity;

establishing at least one service rule used for contacting the at least one other entity, wherein the service rule comprises a user-customizable rule specifying information that pertains specifically to the other entity and that is to be elicited from the other entity; [[and]]

establishing at least one contact rule used for contacting the user after the at least one other entity has been contacted;

when the user is unavailable to initiate contact, automatically contacting each entity on the contact list and eliciting the specified information according to the at least one service rule;

obtaining information from the other entity; and

subsequently conveying the obtained information to the user if the at least one contact rule is satisfied.

2. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the contact list is a database and the contact list includes information selected from names, phone numbers, email addresses, pager numbers, and a combination thereof.

3. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the at least one service rule is selected from how to contact the at least one entity, what to ask the at least one entity, a time period to contact the at least one entity, and a combination thereof.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim [[4]] 1, wherein the contact list comprises at least two entities and the user is contacted after each of the at least two entities is contacted if the at least one contact rule has been satisfied.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim [[4]] 1, wherein the contact list comprises at least two entities and the user is contacted after all of the at least two entities is contacted if the at least one contact rule has been satisfied.

7. (Currently Amended) A machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine for causing the machine to perform the steps of:

establishing a contact list comprising the at least one other entity;

establishing at least one service rule used for contacting the at least one other entity, wherein the service rule comprises a user-customizable rule specifying information that pertains specifically to the other entity and that is to be elicited from the other entity; [[and]]

establishing at least one contact rule used for contacting the user after the at least one other entity has been contacted;

when the user is unavailable to initiate contact, automatically contacting each entity on the contact list and eliciting the specified information according to the at least one service rule;

obtaining information from the other entity; and  
subsequently conveying the obtained information to the user if the at least one contact rule is satisfied.

8. (Original) The machine-readable storage of Claim 7, wherein the contact list is a database and the contact list includes information selected from names, phone numbers, email addresses, pager numbers, and a combination thereof.

9. (Original) The machine-readable storage of Claim 7, wherein the at least one service rule is selected from how to contact the at least one entity, what to ask the at least one entity, a time period to contact the at least one entity, and a combination thereof.

10. (Cancelled).

11. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable storage of Claim [[10]] 7, wherein the contact list comprises at least two entities and the user is contacted after each of the at least two entities is contacted if the at least one contact rule has been satisfied.

12. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable storage of Claim [[10]] 7, wherein the contact list comprises at least two entities and the user is contacted after all of the at least two entities is contacted if the at least one contact rule has been satisfied.

13. (Currently Amended) A system of permitting a user to remain in contact with at least one other entity comprising:

means for establishing a contact list comprising the at least one other entity;

means for establishing at least one service rule used for contacting the at least one other entity, wherein the service rule comprises a user-customizable rule specifying information that pertains specifically to the other entity and that is to be elicited from the other entity; [[and]]

means for establishing at least one contact rule used for contacting the user after the at least one other entity has been contacted

means for, when the user is unavailable to initiate contact, automatically contacting each entity on the contact list and eliciting the specified information according to the at least one service rule;

means for obtaining information from the other entity; and

means for subsequently conveying the obtained information to the user if the at least one contact rule is satisfied.

14. (Original) The system of Claim 13, wherein the contact list is a database and the contact list includes information selected from names, phone numbers, email addresses, pager numbers, and a combination thereof.

15. (Original) The system of Claim 13, wherein the at least one service rule is selected from how to contact the at least one entity, what to ask the at least one entity, a time period to contact the at least one entity, and a combination thereof.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim ~~[[16]]~~ 13, wherein the contact list comprises at least two entities and the system includes means for contacting the user after each of the at least two entities is contacted if the at least one contact rule has been satisfied.

18. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim ~~[[16]]~~ 13, wherein the contact list comprises at least two entities and the system includes means for contacting the user after all of the at least two entities is contacted if the at least one contact rule has been satisfied.